

From the office of

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## Greetings from the MN NRCS State Conservationist, William Hunt

As State Conservationist for NRCS in the great state of Minnesota, I can look back at 2004 with a great deal of pride and satisfaction. In particular, I would like to thank each and every one of you for the excellent team work spirit you have exhibited this past year.

Our locally led process continues to be powerfully effective in all 91 Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation Districts. This has opened the door to greater opportunity for more farmers than ever before to receive federal farm program benefits. The result has been more and better conservation applied to our Minnesota lands than ever before.

Area and State Office staffs continue to work closely with field office employees throughout Minnesota. This is important as we need to make sure the field office employees are equipped with the right information and tools to perform their jobs. Your time and efforts are appreciated.

Over 84,000 hours were recorded in Earth Team Volunteer hours for Minnesota in 2004. Continue to be on the look out for ways that we can include these valuable people in our offices.

On August 26, 2004 Minnesota was honored to have the very first Conservation Security Program (CSP) contract signed in the country near Vernon Center, Minnesota at the James and Peggy Pahl farm. Our Minnesota NRCS employees and Partners worked tirelessly to make the results of the Blue Earth River CSP Watershed a positive outcome and a model for the nation. Thanks to all of you and your efforts we succeeded. Failure is never an option for the high performing conservation partnership team in Minnesota!

WILLIAM HUNT  
State Conservationist

## 35,000 Acre Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge to Preserve Tallgrass Prairie and Wetlands in NW Minnesota

Thirty-five thousand acres of wetland and tall grass prairie habitat in Minnesota have become the Nation's newest National Wildlife Refuge as a result of the action taken on October 12, 2004 by Interior Secretary Gale Norton and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Director Steve Williams, moving forward the nation's largest tall grass prairie and wetland restoration project in our Nation's history.

To date, the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) has provided funding to restore 13,000 acres of wetlands at Glacial Ridge on both land owned by private landowners and the Nature Conservancy. WRP is a program administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Left-Right William Hunt, State Conservationist, Ron Nargang, MN State Director for the Nature Conservancy, Governor Tim Pawlenty and Secretary of Interior Gale Norton

Keep your mind open to change all the time.  
Welcome it. Court it. It is only by examining and reexamining your opinions and ideas that you can progress. - DALE CARNEGIE

True enthusiasm is made of two parts: eagerness and assurance. Be excited about something and express confidence in your ability to handle it. That's all enthusiasm takes. Have those two feelings about a project, and your enthusiasm will be dangerous contagious. You'll have it. Others will know you have it. Pretty soon, they'll have it, too. Guaranteed.



## USDA ANNOUNCES SECOND WETLANDS RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP

### Minnesota Project to Restore 7,250 Acres to Prairies and Wetlands

Minnesota's application to become the second state in the Nation to participate in the USDA's Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) was announced on October 25, 2004 at the Minnesota State Capitol. Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty and Agriculture Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment R. Mack Gray made the announcement during an event in St Paul to highlight the partnership that will accelerate the state's wetland restoration efforts. Governor Pawlenty and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources in partnership with NRCS State Conservationist William Hunt, submitted an application to the NRCS earlier in October, 2004.

The targeted restoration funds will focus on approximately 7,250 acres throughout Minnesota. Goals and regions include:

3,000 acres in the five Presidentially Declared Flood Disaster Counties of Dodge, Faribault, Freeborn, Mower, and Steele Counties in southern Minnesota; 1,750 acres along the Red River of the North main stem; 1,500 acres in the Buffalo-Red River Watershed in northwestern; and 1,000 acres in the Grand Marais Creek Subwatershed in northwestern Minnesota.



Cultural Resources Training at Deep Portage by  
Patrick McLoughlin

Over 60 NRCS employees completed Cultural Resources during a week in September. The training was held at the Deep Portage Environmental Learning Center near Hackensack. Participants not only learned about NRCS Cultural Resources Policy and Procedures, but also about the prehistory and early history of Minnesota. Everyone was able to observe a Flintknapping demonstration, compliments of Grant Goltz, long-time Minnesota Archaeologist. The field trip included a visit to two previously excavated prehistoric archaeological sites, including one near South Pike Bay in the Chippewa National Forest, as well as a stop at the Chippewa National Forest Historic supervisor's Finnish-style log structure was built in 1936 by the Civilian Conservation Corps and Work Project Administration laborers.

Photo Contest-2004 thank you!

This past year MN NRCS had a digital photo contest. Throughout the last 12 months we have had several of our employees participate. We are grateful for your eagerness to participate and certainly hope that you consider participating in the 2005 digital photo contest.

Last Acre Ceremony Held Near Milaca, Minnesota  
October 19, 2004

The Last Acre Ceremony was a day of celebration in Mille Lacs County. It signified the end of soil mapping for Kanabec and Mille Lacs County Soil Survey efforts. Ceremonies such as these provide an opportunity for NRCS to tell others how important soil surveys are for the citizens of their county and certainly a way for Soil Scientists and other NRCS employees to let others know about the good we do on a daily basis with the people in our counties where we live and work.

More information about Soils in Minnesota can be found on our MN NRCS web page. Take the time to check it out.



Jerry Gorton, Soil Survey Project Leader for the Kanabec and Mille Lacs County Soil Survey

<http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov> Click in on Soils

## SOUTH FORK ZUMBRO FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT OFFERS LESSONS TO FUTURE ENGINEERS by Karen Buckley

**ROCHESTER, MN** – For over 10 years, a class of civil engineer students from the University of Minnesota have studied the design of actual flood control structures. Recently, this year's class, with the guidance of technical staff from the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Rochester, toured South Fork Zumbro River PL566 Watershed project.

Engineering and funding for flood control of the South Fork Zumbro River were provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service under the Public Law 566 Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program.

### History of the South Fork Zumbro Watershed Project

In July 1978, just a few days after an already heavy rain event, a more concentrated rain event occurred from Dodge County to Winona County. The heaviest band of rain totaled at 7" just south and east of the Rochester area resulting in extensive damage. The tributaries of the South Fork Zumbro River include Bear Creek, Silver Creek and Cascade Creek. The crest established a record of 23.36 feet. Five people lost their lives, and \$79 million in property and infrastructure damage occurred. Four of the five were killed when they were trapped in a nursing home on Bear Creek. This flood prompted the proposal for a major flood control project. NRCS, along with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Rochester, tackled this Project at a cost of \$92 million.

The South Zumbro PL566 Watershed project, completed in 1995, has six flood control dams and one multi-purpose dam. The river banks in Rochester also were changed from dirt to rip-rap and cement walls. "The goal of the South Fork Zumbro River project was to offer flood protection to Rochester against a 200-year recurrence interval flood event," said Dave Copeland, District Conservationist for NRCS in Olmsted County. Approximately 200,540 acres within the watershed are a part of the project. Nearly two-thirds of Rochester lies within the floodplain formed by the South Fork Zumbro River and its tributaries.

This year, U of M students studied the KR-7 structure. The KR-7 structure is located in Section 25 of Kalmar Township and impounds a tributary of the South Fork Zumbro River. Rob Romocki, Area Engineer for NRCS spoke to the class during a two hour tour of the watershed project. "NRCS constructed seven upstream impoundments that are reducing the design discharge by 16% to 35% on the river and tributaries. Given the recent heavy rains and flooding in Austin and Albert Lea, the study of this structure is timely and relevant to these students." Romocki said.



### Origins of Food Day Held in Farmington

Located just east of Lakeville and south of Apple Valley and Rosemount, Minnesota is a fast growing suburb with strong agricultural roots - Farmington.

Once known as a "village of farms", Farmington has changed due to urban sprawl. Understanding the importance that agricultural has in a community, Farmington middle schools recently hosted their second annual "Origins of Agriculture" Day. The event has become the largest Agriculture Education Day in the State. Students had the opportunity to visit local farms and attend six of over 40 presentations in the school.

Michelle Wohlers, District Conservationist, Matthew Schaar, Soil Conservation Technician and Julie MacSwain, Public Affairs Specialist represented NRCS at the Origin of Foods Day.

## Canby Creek Project completed at Stone Hill Regional Park near Canby, Minnesota

**Canby, Minnesota** -Several local sponsors of the recently completed facilities project near Canby, Minnesota show cased their end results to several NRCS employees near Canby, Minnesota on Friday, October 22, 2004. During the fall of 2001, Lac qui Parle- Yellow Bank Watershed District approached the NRCS on the possibility of adding facilities to Del Clark Lake which would provide people with disabilities access to the lake for fishing. The project consisted of three major components

- A designated parking area consisting of three van-accessible parking lanes for people with disabilities.
- Installation of a floating fishing pier on Del Clark Lake. The pier was made available through an agreement with Minnesota DNR and Lac qui Parle- Yellow Bank Watershed District.
- Installation of concrete pathways between the parking area, restrooms, fishing pier, and picnic pad site.

The construction and project plans were completed around January, 2004 and construction was completed during June 2004 for approximately \$56,000, which was equally divided between NRCS and the Lac qui Parle Yellow Bank Watershed District.

William Hunt, State Conservationist for Minnesota in NRCS has viewed this completed project as his most favorite project he has seen completed during his career with NRCS. This project will now open up the doors of opportunity for more people to enjoy



the recreational opportunities that Del Clark Lake provides in SW Minnesota



*L-R Jim Axel, NRCS State Office and Paul Bridgeland, Area Engineer visited the completed fishing pier*



## FIVE MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS INCLUDED IN HISTORIC EXPANSION OF THE NATIONAL CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM

Five Minnesota watersheds are among the 202 watersheds across the nation eligible for participation in a historic new program designed to reward farmers for long term stewardship. On November 5, 2004 a special CSP media event was held at the Dan and Cara Miller farm near Spring Valley, Minnesota. NRCS Associate Chief Merlin Bartz shared with those assembled the five Minnesota CSP watersheds which were selected for CSP roll out in 2005.

"As an agency, the mission of NRCS has been to help farmers and ranchers address conservation problems, such as soil erosion, and improve water conservation," said William Hunt, Minnesota State Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) "The CSP represents a whole new direction in conservation and agriculture policy and programs. CSP will make payments to approved participants for demonstrable long-term stewardship and will reward many of those who undertook conservation on their own initiative to care for the resources we share."

More information will be posted regarding CSP over the next few weeks. The MN NRCS web site will contain information which will be



KEY for the roll out of the CSP watersheds in 2005. Merlin Bartz, Assistant Regional NRCS Chief made the Minnesota announcement of the selected CSP watersheds at the Dan and Cara Miller farm on Nov 5, 2004.

Current Developments

## "Treating People with Dignity and Respect" by MN NRCS Civil Rights Chair, Amy Stratton

So how do we treat people with dignity and respect? Treat others as they want to be treated. Ask if you don't know the proper way someone wants to be addressed or how they wish to be treated. When working with disabled clients or co workers the following Business Tips edited from Respect the Disabled web site (<http://www.alttrue.net>) may help.

Make certain the aisles in your business are wide enough so that a person in a wheelchair or with a guide dog or canine assistant can get through. Disabled people ought to have the same free access to your business as every other customer.

Make certain your business complies with all ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements for disabled parking and access zones. The ADA website offers free materials for download which give specific engineering and construction specifications for disabled parking and access zones. A lot of companies fail to provide the access zone next to what disabled parking space they do provide. There are over 25 million disabled people in America.

Do not let non-disabled customers park in disabled parking spaces or access zones. Your disabled customers deserve equal access to your business.

Keep motorcycles and bicycles from blocking the access zones and sidewalks in front of your business. Many times a person in a wheelchair or who uses a guide dog or canine assistant has their access blocked by motorcycles or bicycles on the sidewalk to a businesses front door.

When you are dealing with a disabled client or customer speak directly to the disabled person. Deal directly with the disabled person you are treating or doing business with. Doing otherwise is considered rude and unprofessional.

## Robert Marthaler, Johnny Appleseed of Conservation

By Jerry Purdin, DC Pipestone



Our Local newspaper, in their write-up on Robert Marthaler's recent retirement, coined him as the 'Johnny Appleseed' of conservation. After the article came out in the paper Bob actually claimed being in tight with Johnny and planting many of the apple trees we now enjoy across the great state of Minnesota.

*Bob* arrived in Pipestone County in 1966. Prior to working in Pipestone County Bob was a District Technician in Stearns County for 21 1/2 years (1964-1966). Prior to this he had served his Country in the Army, spending part of his tour in Germany.



Bob was honored earlier this year by receiving the Civil Servant of the Year Award from the Federal Executive Board of Minnesota.

In order to fully appreciate his accomplishments, one needs to simply jump in the pick-up truck and drive through the Northern and Eastern parts of Pipestone County. He has left a legacy of conservation on the land in the form of sediment basins and grassed waterways. Bob understood that through it all our end goal was to get conservation on the land. That's what matters and that's what will conserve our resources for the long-term.

His contributions to this Agency in terms of building trust with our clients and completing quality conservation projects have been noted. His sense of excitement for the job (even after 40 years) and sense of humor will be missed here.

Bob retired from the NRCS on September 3, 2004. His friends and fellow co-workers gave him a royal roasting on the evening of September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mike Appel recognized Bob for his over 42 years & 2 months worth of Federal Service. It was a special evening, and one that none of us will soon forget.

### *Begin Again*

Every day is a fresh beginning, Every morn is the world made new, You who are weary of sorrow and sinning, Here is a beautiful hope for you, --A hope for me and a hope for you.

Every day is a fresh beginning; Listen, my soul, to the glad refrain, And, spite of old sorrow and older sinning, And puzzles forecasted and possible pain, Take heart with the day, and begin again.

-Susan Coolidge

## Area 1

### Dennis Johnson is retiring from NRCS

Dennis Johnson will be retiring from NRCS in the very near future and we asked him to share his history and career while working with SCS/NRCS. Dennis, thank-you and best wishes in your retirement from everyone in Area 1.



My career started in Larimore North Dakota as a WAE. After several years I was hired as the Soil Conservation Technician in Devils Lake. I worked on Channel A, the channel connecting all the lakes North of Devils Lake. I also conducted a survey on the natural outlet for the lake.

I was chosen for the Upward Mobility Program and ended up going to NDSU while working in the West Fargo Field Office. Upon graduation I was sent to Killdeer, ND. With my background as a technician with engineering skills, I was put to work doing just that.

After Killdeer I became the District Conservationist in Garrison ND and later transferred to Cooperstown ND. While working in Cooperstown I was mobilized in the US Army from 9-12-1990 to 7-30-1991 and served in Operation Desert Shield/Storm/Provide Comfort in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq.

I was offered the Mahanomen Field Office position and now after over 33 years of service I will be retiring on December 30, 2004. I leave behind a great bunch of people who I have enjoyed working with and for. I remember the good old days and how it was before Food Security Act, many can't remember anything but. When it is your turn, you will also remember the good old days. Your turn will come sooner than you think. Turn around and tis there. Good luck!

Prepared by Dennis Johnson, DC, Mahanomen  
Current Developments



### Personnel News

#### New hires

Welcome to our newest employees, some already on board and some starting in December.

Amanda Jepson, Soil Conservation Technician, began working in Ada in mid October. Amanda is a graduate of North Dakota State University with an emphasis in range management and a North Dakota native.

Welcome to Eldon Frye who started his duties as a Soil Conservation Technician in Park Rapids this fall as well. Eldon is also a graduate of NDSU with an emphasis in range management and hails from North Dakota in the western portion of the state.

Shelly Micke will be working in the Bagley field office as a Soil Conservation Technician beginning in mid December. Shelly is a graduate of the U of M- Duluth with coursework in water quality and environmental studies and is a native of that area as well.

U of M- Crookston graduate Nicol Bennett will begin his duties as Soil Conservation Technician in Roseau in mid December. Nicol's major area of study was in natural resources and he grew up in the Newfolden area.

Welcome back to Donna Christianson, our accounting technician. Donna worked for us a few years ago in the Pembina Trail RC&D office before moving to the Twin Cities, pursuing coursework in accounting, then on to Arizona and now back to Minnesota. Donna will also start in mid December.



## Area 2



### Wet Fall Makes Field Work Difficult in Grant County

The rain started in early September with 1.5 inches just as the grassed waterway had been constructed but not seeded yet. The next week, the earthwork contractor repaired the waterway where it eroded so that it could be seeded. The seeding contractor was still able to seed, mulch, and crimp the waterway by the seeding deadline. However, another storm dumped more than 2 inches of rain that night and ripped another gully down the middle of the waterway again. This would be just the beginning of a long, wet, frustrating fall for Grant County farmers. A total of 6-8 inches of rain fell in September and another 2-3 inches fell in October.

Too much rain, cool temperatures, and nothing growing to use any moisture caused the fields to become and stay saturated throughout the fall. Combines with tracks and/or rear-wheel-assist were in high demand as farmers were desperate to harvest their fields. Many of those that did left ruts as deep as 2 to 3 feet deep across the fields. Many other farmers are still waiting (as of Thanksgiving) for the soil to freeze so they can get across frozen ground to harvest their crops, especially soybeans. As of mid-November, 80-90% of soybeans in the western half of the county were still in the field where as in the eastern part of the county where it has more rolling terrain, 80-90% of the crops are harvested now. Especially impacted were the sugar beet farmers who left approximately 2000 – 2500 acres of sugar beets in the field unharvested in Grant County as the sugar beet plant would not accept them due to too much mud and poor condition. As of Thanksgiving about 50% of the corn was harvested county-wide.

Most people cannot remember a year in which there was so much corn left standing during deer hunting season. This caused the deer harvest to be less fruitful also.

The wet conditions also had an impact of conservation projects in the county. Only 1 producer was able to install his underground outlet for his water and sediment control basins. However, even he was unable to build the dikes due to wet soil conditions. All the WRP wetland restoration and EQIP erosion control projects were put on hold until next year and the grassed waterway at the beginning of this story still has a gully down the middle that will have to wait until next spring to be repaired.

Prepared by Bob Koltres, DC, Elbow Lake FO

#### Personnel News

##### New hires

Area II is happy to announce the hiring of Jennifer Hansen as our new Accounting Technician. Jennifer began her new duties with NRCS on November 15th.

Ivan Reinke has been hired as the new SCT in the Wadena FO beginning on November 29th. Ivan was working for the Wadena SWCD and was their lead technician for the past 7 plus years.

Lenore Marken has been offered and has accepted the Wetland Biologist position and will begin her new duties starting January 9, 2005. Lenore brings multi-state experience to the position as well as both public and private wetland work experience.

Elbow Lake SCT, Brent Gulbrandson, was married on October 9th. Welcome to married life, Brent!

## Area 3

### Indigenous Renewable Energy Project by Steve Kluess

The Indigenous Renewable Energy Project is an innovative partnership of private, public, and tribal entities that creates an economically viable and environmentally friendly light industrial park. A biorefinery is the mainstay of this project. This refinery will provide heat, steam, cooling, and hot water to power the industrial park. The park will have a "green" generation system to enable private companies to produce their products. One driving force behind this project is the Native American philosophy of harmonious coexistence by not damaging the natural surroundings.

The money generated from sales will be retained within the local area and economy. Providing the industrial park with biomass from local wood waste streams and other locally grown and harvested biomass sources drives this concept. Biomass from harvested brush lands, timber sale slash, and other wood product manufacturing facilities will provide the raw energy needed. The John Deere Slashbundler takes formerly wasted logging slash and bundles it into 28 inch diameter, 10 foot long logs that can be stored in the woods until needed by the biomass power plant or refinery. Bundled logs can be easily transported by conventional logging equipment and loaded onto semi trailers for over-the-road hauling. Each bundle is the equivalent of approximately 28 gallons of petroleum. Biorefineries and other processing facilities can utilize these logs to create electricity, hydrogen, and other synthetic fuels and products

*The John Deere Slashbundler takes formerly wasted logging and slash and transforms it into bundles to be used at a biomass refinery for Projects such as the Indigenous Energy Project.*



Students at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, tribal colleges, and seven area community colleges will have a hands-on teaching and learning center for job training in renewable energy and power systems. Curriculum for these programs is under development at this time.

The main partners include Laurentian , Onanegozie, and WESMIN RC&D Councils, Indigenous Energy Partners, Minnesota Agroforestry Cooperative, University of Minnesota Extension Service, University of Minnesota-Duluth, Department of Natural Resources- Forestry Division, NRCS, National Renewable Energy Laboratory and a host of tribal entities.



*The John Deere Slashbundler is making progress in the northern woods for the biomass project.*

## Area 4

### Reach for the Stars 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Girl's Conference on Non-Traditional Careers By Melanie Dickman, Soil Conservationist

Melanie Dickman, Soil Conservationist, Waite Park recently participated in the "Reach for the Stars" 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Girl's Conference on Non-Traditional Careers. The conference was held November 4, 2004, in St. Cloud. This event was open to all 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls in the St. Cloud area. Approximately 200 girls participated in the conference.

The conference is designed to provide our future leaders with an opportunity to learn about a wide array of careers typically nontraditional to women (less than 25 percent of the employees in the field are women). The girls had an opportunity to dialogue about issues such as getting your first job and post secondary education options.

At the conference, Melanie informed the girls about her education, NRCS pay scale and benefits, daily work activities, and why she chose her career. Melanie also provided hands on experience by identifying grasses and wildflowers with the students in a field that has a native grass planting that was designed by NRCS.

#### Awards:

John Crellin, Brooklyn Center AO - Monetary - Technical assistance provided to the Blue Earth Watershed during the Conservation Security Program (CSP) sign-up for FY-2004.

George Montgomery, Stillwater - Non Monetary- Technical assistance provided to the Blue Earth Watershed during the CSP sign-up for FY-2004.

Andy Porupsky, Jordan - Non Monetary - Technical assistance provided to the Blue Earth Watershed during the CSP sign-up for FY-2004.

Patrick Gehling, Foley - Non Monetary - Efforts in providing training and sharing their work experience with the 2004 Student Interns.

Craig Peterson, Brooklyn Center AO - Non Monetary- Efforts in providing training and sharing experience with the 2004 Student Interns.

Steve Sellnow, Waite Park - Non Monetary - Efforts in providing training and sharing experience with the 2004 Student Interns.

Stan Wendland, Jordan - Non Monetary- Efforts in providing training and sharing experience with the 2004 Student Interns.

Kristie Mack, Stillwater - Non Monetary Award and Certificate of Appreciation - Dedicated effort to conservation.

#### Current Developments



Michelle Wohlers, Farmington - Non Monetary- Efforts in assisting with the implementation of conservation programs within Dakota County.

Matt Schaar, Farmington - Non Monetary - Efforts in assisting with the implementation of conservation programs within Dakota County.

Michael Vasquez, Brooklyn Center AO - Non Monetary- Extra effort as Safety Coordinator in FY-2004.

Edward Musielewicz, Elk River - Non Monetary- Efforts in implementing conservation programs in Anoka, Hennepin, and Sherburne County.

Jerry Anderson, Elk River - Non Monetary- Efforts in implementing conservation programs in Anoka, Hennepin, and Sherburne County.

Steve Sellnow, Waite Park - Non Monetary- Contribution, time, and effort in the completion of a successful EQIP sign-up.

Melanie Dickman, Waite Park - Non Monetary- Contribution, time, and effort in the completion of a successful EQIP sign-up.

Michael Hemmann, Waite Park - Non Monetary- Contribution, time, and effort in the completion of a successful EQIP sign-up.

George Mohrhauser, Waite Park - Non Monetary- Contribution, time, and effort in the completion of a successful EQIP sign-up.

Lee Zabinski, Waite Park - Non Monetary - Contribution, time, and effort in the completion of a successful EQIP sign-up.

Dave Acheson, Waite Park - Non Monetary - Contribution, time, and effort in the completion of a successful EQIP sign-up.

Isadore Thielen, Waite Park - Non Monetary Award - Contribution, time, and effort in the completion of a successful EQIP sign-up.

Emily Wolf, Waite Park - Non Monetary - Contribution, time, and effort in the completion of a successful EQIP sign-up.

Sarah Sewell, Waite Park - Non Monetary Contribution, time, and effort in the completion of a successful EQIP sign-up.

Dakota SWCD - Certificate of Appreciation - Efforts in assisting with the implementation of conservation programs

Stearns SWCD - Certificate of Appreciation - Contribution, time, and effort in the completion of a successful EQIP sign-up.

New hires-Hani Nguyen, Soil Conservation Technician (WAE), Brooklyn Center, EOD 10/3/04

Amy Robak, Soil Conservation Aid (WAE), Foley, EOD 10/31/04

October, November, December 2004

## Area 5



### Area Office Moves by Michael D. Appel, ASTC (FO)

We are slowly getting ourselves used to the idea that we have moved to a new location within the city of Marshall. For a while, some of us drove to the prior office before it registered that we had moved. We were at the old address for nearly 19 years. There were only two of us who made that move in 1985, Karen Bakke, and Mike Appel. A lot of faces have come and gone in those years. The most significant change in the old location was the 1985 Farm Bill which brought CRP and the Sod and Swampbuster provisions. We had wetland teams that spent months looking at photos and delineating wetlands, teams that did HEL determinations using soil survey information and area of fice staff that assisted in several field offices during heavy CRP signups. Those days are fortunately past. This move was the result of outgrowing the old location. We feel that the new space will adequately meet our needs hopefully for the next 10-20 years. Some of us won't be around for the next move. What will the legacy be of the new location, EQIP, CSP or some other initiative yet to be rolled out? We are located at 800 East Main Suite 400, next to HY-Vee grocery. Stop in when you get to town.

### Awards

...Those that assisted on the Blue Earth River CSP were given framed Certificates of Appreciation from Bill Hunt. A seal on the certificate read "CSP 2004 Survivor, Blue Earth Watershed", how appropriate. ...Several performance awards were submitted and recipients will be recognized later.

### Personnel News

...David Voigt, Soil Conservation Technician in Madison got married this past month. We wish the couple the best of luck.

...Karen Bakke, although not a new employee, will be converting to the new USDA, ITS staff. This change was effective November the 29<sup>th</sup>. We wish Karen good luck and will keep her desk full of work orders.

## Area 6

### Putting Green Opens First Nine Holes

Putting Green Environmental Adventure Park opened their first nine holes this fall. The mini golf course holes, designed by students in the New Ulm area, are based on current environmental issues. For instance, one hole is designed to teach about how much pollution can get into the river through the storm-water system.

The park is geared to blend education and recreation. Each of 18 miniature golf holes would feature an interactive learning station promoting sustainable resource use.

An indoor learning center will include a classroom and laboratory with a "green" store and concession stand selling environmentally-friendly products and healthful snacks. Minnesota native plants will be grown in gardens and along park walk ways. The collaborative project includes individuals and families, organizations and agencies, business and industry and youth with adult mentors. Youth serve on the board of directors, developed the business plan, designed miniature golf holes, buildings and landscaping and would operate and maintain Putting Green. Three Rivers RC&D Council has received a grant for the park and grant writing assistance from NRCS, 501(c)3. NRCS has provided technical assistance. The Park is located on the river and is open limited hours this fall, and for spring 2005.



Bike and canoe rental  
River pier with monitoring station for hands on scientific investigation  
Interpretive river trail

## Current Developments



### Awards

The following individuals received CSP certificates for their commitment and hard work during the CSP sign-up.

Ryan Kruse, Jason Sickmann, Steve Breaker, Krista Olson, Meghan Lene, Traci Miest, Larry Schmidt, Yamika Stokes, Blue Earth County SWCD, Martin County SWCD, and Faribault County SWCD.

Pat Bay received recognition for her leadership with the Earth Team Volunteer Program with a certificate. Steve Becker, Area Engineer, received a time off award for providing precise technical assistance. Doug Miller, Area Soil Scientist, received a certificate of appreciation for his consistent and timely edits and updates in the NASIS system.

The following employees received non-monetary keepsake awards for their hard work and extra effort in reporting progress into PRS.

Mike Taylor, DC, Willmar  
Jeff Kjomess, DC, Olivia  
Greg Tennant, DC, Sleepy Eye  
Dennis Reimers, DC, Glencoe  
Phillis Brey, DC, St. James

Ken Luttner received a barn jacket for giving visitors from Japan a tour of different practices.

### Personnel News

#### New Employees

Phoukham "Pooh" Vongkhamdy new District Conservationist in Mankato Mn, joined area 6 on November 1, 2004.

Yamika Stokes, District Conservationist, in St. Peter, started on November 15, 2004.

Coreen Brenke, Accounting Technician located in Area Office, will begin her career with NRCS on January 10, 2005.

Upon graduation, Josh Bork, will start on January 10, 2005 as a Soil Conservationist in Willmar.

Retiring After 38 years with NRCS, Larry Schmidt is retiring!



Congratulations Larry!!

October, November, December 2004



## **EARTH TEAM VOLUNTEER GAINS VALUABLE EXPERIENCE WITH ROCHESTER FIELD OFFICE**

Jessica Weis knows what she wants and isn't afraid to work to get it. These qualities guided her to the Rochester NRCS Field Office this fall to inquire about volunteer opportunities.

Jessica, a senior at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, wanted to gain some additional experience before graduating in December. She completed an internship with NRCS in Michigan this past summer as a soil scientist, and wanted some experience working in a field office learning what DCs, Soil Conservationists, and SCTs do. Her class schedule and a friend living in the Rochester area allowed her to be available every Friday, so she contacted Dave Copeland, District Conservationist. Dave signed her up as an Earth Team volunteer and she's been assisting the office every Friday since early September, assisting with laying out, surveying, and staking terraces and grassed waterways. In addition, she assisted staff with the City of Rochester in developing several brochures to inform landowners how to protect fens near their developments. This project enabled her to earn independent study credits through the University.



Jessica has already accepted a position with Michigan NRCS and will begin her NRCS career in January. It has definitely been a mutually beneficial experience in the Rochester FO.

Prepared by Dave Copeland, DC, Rochester FO

## **Personnel News**

### **Promotions**

Dan Gunderson was recently converted from the Federal Career Intern Program to Career Conditional and he was also promoted from GS-06 to GS-07.

Holly Kesteloot was promoted from GS-05 to GS-07 effective November 28, 2004.

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